

OK!
MIDDLE EAST
FIRST FOR CELEBRITY NEWS



The Best Travel Destinations 2011

FUN STAYCATIONS

**EXOTIC
GETAWAYS**

**EUROPEAN
BREAKS**

**USA
HOLIDAYS**



PLUS: THE MOST STYLISH SUNNIES AND COOLEST BEACH ACCESSORIES

Dreamland Aqua Park

A complete family fun destination



WORDS: GLAZA SEGUIA, IMAGES SUPPLIED



Like an oasis in the desert, this water theme park is set across 250,000 square metres of green landscape in Umm Al Quwain. Dreamland is one of the largest aqua parks in the region and features more than 30 water slides, giant pools, and other family-friendly attractions that will make your summer even more exciting.

Special offers: Get the summer Season Pass for only Dhs450 for adults, Dhs250 for children or Dhs1150 for the family. Enjoy additional treats if you register before May 31. Or avail year-round rates of Dhs135 for general admission and Dhs85 for children under 1.2 metres.

Who should go: The whole family, especially fun for kids.

Where to dine: All that swimming and splashing can work up an appetite, and thankfully there are several dining options including the Atlantis Restaurant, serving Arabic dishes as well as the freshest seafood. If you prefer authentic Indian and Asian delicacies, try the Taj Mahal Restaurant or grab a quick bite at the Snack Attack. For drinks and shisha, head down to the poolside bar, which is the largest in the UAE.

How to relax: Work on your tan by the impressive pool area or book a Waterside Camping package complete with camping gear, food and entertainment.

The highlights: Enjoy the largest wave pool in the country or swirl down a 40-metre tunnel with the Twister. You and four others can navigate through wild waters at the Family Raft Ride. Other attractions are the Twisting Dragons, Kamikazee, Hippos Island and Mini Pet Land.

To make a reservation call 06 7681888 or go to dreamlanduae.com.

Heaven on Earth

Looking for a slice of paradise? Make like the A-listers and soak up the magical vibe of the Maldives

WORDS BY SARAH BLADEN, IMAGES SUPPLIED



Mariah Carey and husband Nick Cannon



Nick recalled: "I just remember being right by the ocean, with waves crashing all around us. It was simply amazing to share that moment with the woman I love." Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes also honeymooned at this 109-acre resort, which is a 50-minute luxury yacht ride from Male airport.

The Bali-inspired luxury villas are surrounded by lush tropical greenery – OK! recommends the Beach Villas (see below) complete with deep-soak bathtubs, 24/7 butlers and best of all, a pillow-topped hammock which gently swings over the sea.

At lunch, take in the beautiful ocean views over a delicious seafood salad at The Reethi, while dinner at Tapasake, the Japanese over-

water restaurant, is ideal for a romantic soiree. Make sure you try one of their delicious sake cocktails.

For ocean lovers, there are plenty of water activities including big-game fishing, parasailing and banana-tube rides. The gorgeous coral reef makes this an ideal place for snorkelling and diving. Perhaps surprisingly, the One & Only is also a family-friendly resort with a complimentary kids' club, featuring a cute swimming pool and dinky sun loungers. While your children are having fun, you could get pampered at the ESPA spa, stroll along the beach or doze on your hammock. Whatever you decide to do, your stay at this award-winning property will definitely be a memorable one.



Best for hip couples

W RETREAT & SPA HOTEL

This boutique resort (whotels.com) located on the island of Fesdu is an exciting 25-minute seaplane ride from the airport. From the plane windows the sparkling islands in the piercing turquoise waters below beckon. Once on land, every guest is welcomed by friendly W staff (who all go by the Whatever, Whenever, Wherever You Wish philosophy) and offer you a refreshing mocktail before taking you to your private villa. Along all the wooden walkways chill-out music resonates into the sun-kissed Maldivian air, and inside the sexy Ocean Oasis villas there's a king-

sized bed and a cool glass flooring, where you can watch marine life swimming underneath. This is perfect chillaxation material, whether it's taking a dip in the infinity pool, soaking up the rays on your giant sun lounger or climbing down the ladder into the crystal clear seawater below. Throw in the complimentary chocolates and other munchies which are delivered to your room on a regular basis and you don't really need go anywhere.

However for those who wish to check out the rest of the resort, there's yoga, spa treatments, windsurfing and cookery lessons. For adventurous types, OK! recommends going scuba diving or booking a Seabob – an under/over water rocket that screams along at 15km per hour.

When it comes to dining at one of the resort's six restaurants, OK! recommends the divine fresh seafood BBQ at FIRE as well as the romantic FISH restaurant. If you're in the mood to party, head to 15 Below, a

lively upscale grotto bar cum nightclub which features some of the world's top DJs.

W Hotels around the world attract a trendy crowd and here in the Maldives it's no different. Expect to see a few catwalk models and aspiring Richard Branson types wandering around this luxurious playground. **OK!**

HOW DO I GET THERE?

Emirates Airlines (emirates.com)
fly direct from Dubai to Male airport
in the Maldives.

Pristine white sand, swaying coconut palm trees and brilliant turquoise waters – the Maldives is made up of hundreds of tiny atolls twinkling in the Indian Ocean. These exotic islands, adored by honeymooners, are only a three-and-a-half hour flight away from the UAE making them ideal for a relaxing long weekend break.

Best for romance

ONE & ONLY REETHI RAH

If you're looking for a truly stunning resort, you can't go wrong with the award-winning One & Only (oneandonlyresorts.com). Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon renewed their wedding vows here, holding an intimate beach ceremony attended by guests like Beyonce and Jay Z. Later



Shops and the city

OK! ENJOYS A CHIC AND SASSY SHOPPING BREAK WITH THE GIRLS IN THE BIG APPLE!

REPORT BY ASHLEY PEARSON, PHOTOGRAPHS BY GETTY/GALLO IMAGES



Shopping, cocktails and quality me time – we ladies never really need an excuse to visit New York, so why justify it! Just book up, fly off and enjoy. *OK!* sent its native New Yorker to the city that never sleeps for a fabulous break, skipping the mainstream haunts to bring you an insider's guide to the favourite shops and restaurants in trendy neighbourhoods of SoHo, Greenwich Village and the Meatpacking District.

WHERE SHOULD I STAY?

It's not often a new hotel opens in New York, but the Andaz group (andaz.com) launched not one but two

hotels – on Fifth Avenue and Wall Street – last year. *OK!* checked into the 253-room Wall Street hotel, located over 13 floors in a 42-storey skyscraper, within walking distance of all our favourite SoHo boutiques. On arrival at the hotel, there was no formal check-in area – instead we were met by a member of staff who checked us in on their iPad in the sleek lobby lounge while we sipped a glass of wine. The rooms are airy and spacious by Manhattan standards, with 7ft windows, high ceilings and minimalist décor. *OK!* loved the rotating cupboards that can be opened from the bathroom or the bedroom, and complimentary non-alcoholic drinks and snacks in the mini bar. You can also pick up a free latte and muffin from the snack table in the morning on your way out.

SHOP TILL YOU DROP!

Its slogan is fashion worth fighting for and, at Century 21 (Cortlandt St), you have to have sharp elbows to work the rails. It's a bargain-hunter's paradise but don't be surprised if you spot Lady GaGa or Sarah Jessica Parker there. *OK!* snapped up a Marc Jacobs sweater for Dhs260 and a pair of Dior sunnies for Dhs200.

Head slightly uptown to Ninth Street and First Avenue to bag some bargains at Change of Season. This chic store is outfitted with vintage luggage, gilded mirrors and a bellman cart overflowing with wool overcoats by Vivienne Westwood and new arrivals from Milan. It stocks last season's pieces from chic designers at 50-75 per cent of retail price.

Don't miss Pas de Deux, a couple of blocks away in the East Village. Modelled on a chic Parisian boutique with dove gray walls and crystal chandeliers, the store stocks Alexander Wang, Vena Cava and Rag & Bone. If you watched *Eat Pray Love* and liked Julia Roberts' Balinese look, visit Me & Ro (meandrojewelry.com) on Elizabeth Street. It's an enticing Aladdin's Cave overflowing with Asian-accented jewellery.

Vintage lovers should make a beeline to Amarcord (Lafayette St) for a huge collection of second-hand Valentino, Missoni, Gucci and Christian Dior dresses.

DINE OUT IN STYLE

After all that retail therapy, recharge your batteries with some mouthwatering Italian cuisine at Il Cantinori (East Tenth St) in Greenwich Village. This old farmhouse-style restaurant, with its rustic décor, stucco walls and wooden beams, is a celebrity favourite. Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston are fans, Gwyneth Paltrow celebrated her birthday here and Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes took David and Victoria Beckham here for dinner. *OK!* opted for tagliatelle with a tangy roast meat sauce.

We also checked out the hot restaurant of the moment, Minetta Tavern (Minetta St) in the West Village. A warm, buzzing candlelit steak house, it's renowned for serving the best burger in town – as well as a star-studded clientele. *OK!* adored our black Angus gourmet cheeseburger but sadly didn't glimpse regulars Cameron Diaz and Ben Stiller.

FANCY A COCKTAIL OR TWO?

Madam Geneva (Bleecker St) is a well-kept local secret. This dark, sultry lounge bar is not easy to find, with the entrance through the Double Crown restaurant. With lace-pannelled walls, hanging lanterns and a corner gramophone, you're transported back to a speak-easy bar in the Prohibition era. Choosing from the lengthy gin menu, *OK!* sipped ours on a dark-blue leather couch in flickering candlelight. *Gossip Girl*'s Ed Westwick is a regular.

For fabulous margaritas, head to West Village's Cabrito restaurant (Carmine St), a laid-back joint that attracts a trendy crowd. Opt for the Mexican Firing Squad, made with tequila, pomegranate syrup, bitters and fresh lime.

If you have any energy left, check out the clubbing nightspot BlkMarket Membership (blkmarketmembership.com). This all-night party takes place in secret city locations that are only revealed to those who RSVP. Despite the event's name, there's no membership required.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

Taking in a Broadway show is part and parcel of any New York visit. *OK!* managed to secure tickets to *Promises Promises*, starring *Glee*'s Kristin Chenoweth and *Will & Grace* star Sean Hayes.

View the city from above on the High Line walkway, a new attraction featuring meandering paths and lovely gardens, created from an abandoned elevated railway that runs from Gansevoort Street to 34th Street. If you're peckish, dip down from the walkway for lunch at Spice Market (a chic bazaar-style Asian restaurant), visit the designer stores and have cocktails by the rooftop pool at the Gansevoort Hotel in the Meatpacking District. **OK!**

HOW DO I GET THERE?

FLY DIRECT TO NEW YORK FROM DUBAI WITH EMIRATES (EMIRATES.COM) OR FROM ABU DHABI WITH ETIHAD (ETIHADAIRWAYS.COM).



Described as one of Europe's most beautiful cities, visitors to Budapest are in for a lovely treat as there's so much to see and do. For the Hungarian capital is, in fact, a merger of two separate cities – Pest and Buda as well as Óbuda (ancient Buda), separated by the mighty Danube River. Elegant Buda overflows with medieval and baroque treasures in and around the hilltop Castle District, while the cosmopolitan Pest offers five-star hotels, leafy boulevards, and boutique shopping. It's a perfect long weekend destination, one that not only offers bucketloads of history but also majestic bathhouses and a vibrant café culture.

WHERE SHOULD I STAY?

In contrast to the city's historic architecture, the 366-room Kempinski Hotel Corvinus (kempinski-budapest.com), one of the Leading Hotels Of The World, is housed in a modern skyscraper next to Fashion Street (the hotel has a lovely streetside café) and the main shopping thoroughfare of Váci Uta.

There's a good chance you may bump into a famous face or two in the Kempinski as Brad Pitt, Daniel Craig, Madonna, Britney Spears and Gwen Stefani have all stayed at the stylish five-star hotel. And with a branch of celebrity favourite Japanese restaurant Nobu, which has just opened within the hotel, you can expect to see more stars. *OK!*'s suite had amazing views over leafy Erzsébet Square, and we loved the lavish champagne breakfasts, the airy indoor pool and the chic spa.

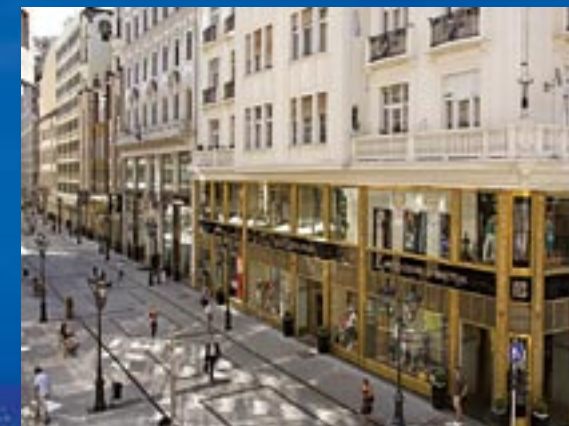
WHERE CAN I SHOP?

Make a beeline to Váci Street for all your High Street favourites – H&M, Esprit, Zara – and for some market stalls, where *OK!* picked up some lovely Art Deco prints for just a few dirhams. The adjacent Fashion Street is home to a Tommy Hilfiger store, you'll find Just Cavalli stocked in Cream, while label lovers should head to the upmarket Andrassy Avenue for top designers including Louis Vuitton.

REPORT BY YASMINE GIBSON, PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CAFÉ GERBAUD, GETTY/GALLO IMAGES AND PHOTOS.COM

Feeling Hungary

Head to beautiful Budapest for culture, cuisine and cool times...



including the Royal Palace and quaint cobbled streets. The most scenic way to reach this historic hilltop complex is by taking the funicular from next to the ornate Chain Bridge. Once there, head to the terrace of the Fisherman's Bastion for panoramic views of the impressive Parliament Building on the opposing riverbank. Visit the House Of Terror on Andrassy Avenue, home to the secret police during Nazi and Communist times, and now a chilling museum.

Budapest is the city of spas but just take note that these are not pampering havens but traditional bathhouses. Although they may be housed in beautiful buildings with mosaics and statues, massages take place on stone slabs where you'll be lathered in soap and given a firm, brisk rub-down! *OK!* chose the Széchenyi Baths, Europe's largest bath complex with 15 indoor and outdoor thermal pools. Even though we arrived at 7am the gloriously grand baths were already full of locals, some half-submerged playing chess!

A picturesque way to take in views of both sides of the city is on board a boat along the Danube. *OK!* boarded a Legenda (legenda.hu) cruise, which allowed us time to have a wander around St Margaret's Island, a tranquil car-free island with beautiful gardens, old ruins and two spa hotels. **OK!**

OK!'S TOP TIP FOR VISITORS, INVEST IN A BUDAPEST CARD (BUDAPESTCARD.COM). IT GETS YOU FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT DURING YOUR STAY AS WELL AS TWO FREE GUIDED SIGHTSEEING TOURS.

HOW DO I GET THERE?

FLY TO BUDAPEST VIA PARIS WITH EMIRATES (EMIRATES.COM) FROM DUBAI.



If you're looking for edible souvenirs, make your way to the Great Market Hall – not just for its mounds of paprika, sausages, hams and wines, but also for the architecture. Take home a bottle of one of the potent pálinka fruit brandies (similar to an Italian grappa) or a bottle of the famous Hungarian dessert wine Tokaji. *OK!* tried it with a traditional Hungarian pancake smothered in chocolate sauce. Heavenly!

WHICH STARS MIGHT I SEE?

Angelina Jolie is a huge fan of the city. Not only did she film *Wanted* here but she was also spotted in Budapest scouting for locations for her directorial debut. Scenes from *Munich* and *Evita* have also been filmed here and *The Rite*, a thriller with Sir Anthony Hopkins, and *Monte*

Carlo, a rom-com starring Nicole Kidman, are being shot in Hungary too.

WHERE CAN I EAT?

Budapest is famous for its patisseries, so indulge in mouthwatering cakes, creamy hot chocolate and handmade ice-cream in one of the city's grand cafes such as Café Gerbeaud (gerbeaud.hu), a city institution on Vörösmarty Square.

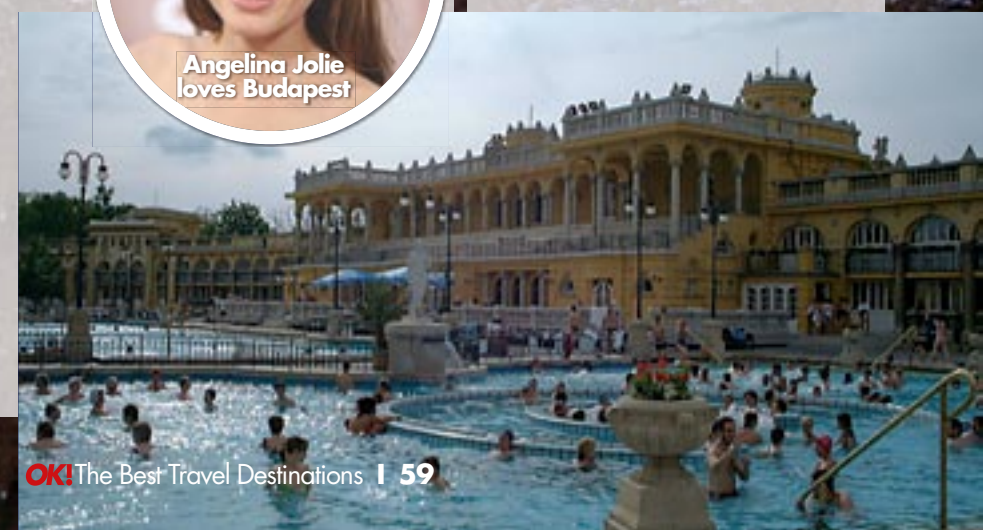
If you want traditional Hungarian cuisine and hearty helpings of goulash, paprika-flavoured chicken, and breaded veal, try Kéli (kehli.hu) and Bagolyvár (bagolyvar.com).

OK!'s favourite restaurant (with attached trendy bar and gallery) was Symbol (symbolbudapest.hu), a chic hotspot where the star-studded after-

party for the Hungarian Grand Prix was held. Following in Soul II Soul's Jazzy B's footsteps, we sipped strawberry Bellinis while feasting on a Hungarian speciality – goose liver in red wine. This is on the Buda side and just a short taxi ride from the main tourist areas. Later we stopped by Verne on Váci Utca – a bizarrely decorated restaurant-club themed around *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*, but sadly we didn't have time to pop in to Fat Mo's – a popular venue for live bands. Next time!

WHAT CAN I DO?

No trip would be complete without a visit to the Castle District, an UNESCO-listed site in Buda, with its amazing collection of architectural treasures



THE ULTIMATE CAPSULE WARDROBE

Trouble picking what to pack for your mini-break? These essentials will ensure you look stylish whatever city you're in.



Travel in style like Glee star Dianna Agron



AVAILABLE AT SONIA RYKIEL Dhs612



AVAILABLE AT H&M Dhs199



AVAILABLE AT RIVER ISLAND Dhs325



AVAILABLE AT VERO MODA Dhs129



AVAILABLE AT CANON Dhs1,399



AVAILABLE AT ZADIG & VOLTAIRE Dhs700



AVAILABLE AT NINA RICCI Dhs4,941



ALAIA AVAILABLE AT HARVEY NICHOLS DhsXXXX



AVAILABLE AT CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN Dhs2,190

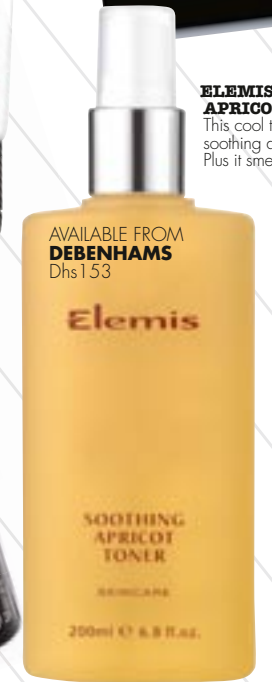


SEPHORA
AVAILABLE FROM SEPHORA Dhs47



AVAILABLE FROM BEAUTYBAY Dhs55

REVLON CUSTOM EYES MASCARA
This ingenious mascara has adjustable bristles that allow you to opt for either a wide defined effect or a layered elongated look.



AVAILABLE FROM DEBENHAMS Dhs153

MIRIAM QUEVEDO TRAVEL KIT
This convenient kit includes a shampoo for difficult hair, an intensive anti-aging 'luxe' mask and a restructuring serum. The tubes are 50ml each, which makes them plane-friendly!



AVAILABLE FROM BLOOMINGDALE'S AND HARVEY NICHOLS Dhs120



MAKE UP FOR EVER SCULPTING KIT
This set of two compact powders composed of a light shade and a darker one is designed to reshape the face using the light and shadow contrast. A great tool for face contouring!



AVAILABLE AT BOBBI BROWN Dhs118

BOBBI BROWN LIMITED EDITION LILAC RICH LIP COLOUR SPF12
Say goodbye to faded lip colour. Just one swipe of this will give your lips intense colour coverage.



AVAILABLE FROM FACES Dhs140

CLARINS CAPITAL LUMIERE NUIT
This softtextured night cream is quickly absorbed and leaves your skin feeling smooth and radiant.

AVAILABLE FROM SEPHORA Dhs441

THE ULTIMATE CAPSULE BEAUTY KIT

If you only have space for 10 products on your trip, then you can't go wrong with the following...



AVAILABLE FROM MAC Dhs198

MAC QUITE CUTE COLLECTION EYE SHADOW PALETTE
These four shades are girly and summery. Plus they'll go with any outfit colour!



AVAILABLE FROM FACES Dhs185

CK ONE SUMMER 100ml
This scent is not only fruity and fresh - it's also unisex so you can share it with your partner! Why pack two perfumes when you can only pack one?

WORDS BY AIDA TARZI, IMAGES SUPPLIED

STRIP AD